

# NEW PLAYS ARE OFTEN WRITTEN ON A MULTIGRAPH

## "Interior" Brings All Arts to the Theatre

Maeterlinck's One-Act Play at the Bantbox Is a Successful Attempt to Interpret Life Without Use of Characterization.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

Not since "The Ziegfeld Follies" left New York has anything more worthy of artistic attention than Maeterlinck's "Interior" been seen here. The art which we have in mind is that of stage decoration.

Just as the stage of the New Amsterdam was employed by Joseph Urban to frame a series of designs, so has the stage of the Bantbox been utilized in the revival of the one-act play, which the Washington Square Players did so well last year. If we remember correctly, "Interior" is published in a volume entitled "Plays for Marionettes." The persons in the play are figures on a canvas or voices in a symphony.

Obviously, life may be interpreted in other terms than those of character. "Interior" shows life as a series of colors, sounds, moods and groups of figures. It is an attempt to make drama the universal art. Painting, sculpture and music are included in its synthesis.

The picture set by "Interior" is an immense yellow window cut across the face of a dark purple stage. Through the window is seen one group of characters in a house, while outside is another group in the darkness of the garden. The figures of the garden gathering are visible only vaguely, save when they move in front of the window and are silhouetted black against the yellow light. The persons confined in the inner frame are simply units in a design. Those who roam in darkness are voices. We learn at the beginning of the play that a child, a member of the household of the inner frame, has been drowned.

An old man, one of the outer group, is delegated to carry the news of the death to the girl's family, but he halts outside the window and hesitates to complete his mission because he can see the peace which reigns over the household. The group in the inner frame is held almost as a tableau at the beginning of the play, but as the heat of the drama increases there is a certain rhythmic shifting of the groupings in the yellow light. The changing moods are suggested for the most part in a dialogue between The Stranger, played by Ralph Roeder, and The Old Man. The sound of the lines is of rather more importance than the context, and the exceedingly musical voice of Mr. Roeder makes it possible for him to play his part exquisitely.

The author undoubtedly had in view a blending of voices and the greatest possibilities of the play in this respect are scarcely realized. As The Stranger and The Old Man discuss the tragedy which has fallen upon the household, a growing murmur is heard of stage. The people of the village are bringing the body of the drowned girl to her home. They are coming by a roundabout way, but the hum of the voices increases spasmodically.

The group in the house cannot hear the noise of the approaching villagers, but in some manner they begin to feel apprehension of the coming sorrow. At length The Old Man deserts the voices and moves into the inner frame. Gesture is more emphatic now, and movement increases as The Old Man makes his news known. With the increase in gesture, the voices grow lower and the punctuations of sound are less frequent except the rising hum of the crowd.

At length the villagers are at the door, and as the Father of the household moves to admit them with the body the curtain falls.

The credit for the splendid performance should go chiefly to Edward Goodman, under whose direction the piece was staged. Obviously the actors are to a certain extent marionettes under the sway of the director, who is the agency by which the various arts that contribute to the play are fused into unity. The Stranger and Ralph Roeder is a fine performance, and also The Old Man of Walter Franklin. Of the interior group Josephine A. Meyer is possibly the best as The Mother. It is, however, somewhat ridiculous to attempt individual comparisons in a play whose whole object is to gain a composite effect.

In spite of the fact that "Interior" is novel to New York theatregoers in its dramatic method, it has always been exceedingly wide in its appeal. Possibly the fact that its message is phrased in so many arts gives it so much the greater chance of interesting each member of the audience.

We have in mind an interesting evening for the dramatic epicure. He would, we think, watch with much interest the remarkably deft opening of "Abe and Mawruss." There is no play in New York which begins with anything like such skill. As soon as the players quit their pinnacles the epicure might quit the Lyric and hasten to the Belasco in order to see the first scene between Arthur Byron and Martha Hedman, and, better yet, the bit where the Doctor discovers that Bud is in love by observing the increase in his pulse as the name of a certain young woman is mentioned.

But the perambulating theatregoer should take care to get away in time to see the curtain of the first act of "Young America." The solitary Jasper jumping against the locked door in an attempt to follow his master still provides the most thrilling curtain in town. The scene at the beginning of the second act of Quineys, might next claim the attention of the wanderer, after which he would do well to witness the meeting of Emily Stevens and Christine Norman in the second act of "The Unchastened Woman," and watch that act to the end.

Dashing from the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre to the Playhouse, the wanderer could see Grace George return to the lodgings of her husband at the beginning of the third act of "The New York Idea." Racing across town, there would still be time to hear "Helena's Husband" at the Bantbox. One more long jump would be necessary, for there is every reason why the last act of Miss Emily Stevens in "The Unchastened Woman" should be on the schedule.

By this time the connoisseur of things theatrical would undoubtedly be tired, but happy. In order to round out his evening and cool off he could see Charlotte and the ice ballet at the Hippodrome.

The films have changed many things in the theatrical world, but the value of a New York verdict remains. The population of the metropolis is a small factor in the vast number to which a motion picture makes its appeal, but somehow or other the sovereignty of New York in setting the fashions of drama is still undisputed. The picture producer wants to know what New York says just as much as the manager of the house which plays travelling attractions. Douglas Fair-

Peggy Wood in "Young America," Gaiety.

Peggy Rush in "Quineys," Maxine Elliott.



Thelma Salter in "Matrimony Triangle-Kay-Bee, Knickerbocker"



Belle Storey in "Hip Hip Hooray," Hippodrome.

### PLAYS TO COME

Week of November 1 to Keep First Nighters Busy.

Four openings are already announced for the week of November 1. Robert H. McLaughlin's play, "The Eternal Magdalene," will begin its career a week from tomorrow at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre. It will be produced by the Selwyns, and will be memorable for the return of Julia Arthur to the stage. Emmett Corrigan will also be in the cast.

On the same evening Klaw & Erlanger will bring "Around the Map," C. M. S. McLellan's newest, into the New Amsterdam. It is a musical production planned along lavish lines.

"Fair and Warmer," a farce by Avery Hopwood, will open at the Eltinge November 2. In the cast will be Janet Beecher, Madge Kennedy, John Cumberland, Ralph Morgan, Hamilton Revelle, Olive May, Robert Fischer and Guy Bragdon.

On November 4 Arnold Daly will open his season in "The Angel in the House" at a theatre yet to be announced.

### Readings at Bantbox.

Muriel Hope, an actress who has appeared on both the German and English stages, will give the first of a series of twelve Sunday evening readings at the Bantbox Theatre to-night. The readings will be given under the auspices of the Rand School of Social Science, and will include Masefield's "Tragedy of Man," Mackaye's "Scarecrow," d'Annunzio's "Ginevra," Tchekov's "Cherry Orchard," Hauptmann's "War" and Verhaeren's "Cloister."

## Where and Why Plays of the Season Continue

"Abe and Mawruss," at the Lyric, Has Technical Merits Which Make It Almost as Good a Play as It Is an Entertainment.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

Comedies. "Abe and Mawruss," at the Lyric Theatre, is a continuation of "Potash and Perlmutter," devised with no little dramatic skill in structure and with a vast amount of entertainment. Barney Bernard, as Abe, gives one of the best pieces of character acting which New York has ever seen.

"Quineys," at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, is a pleasant, slow moving, character study. It is well acted, and will delight all except those who insist on punch in the plays they choose.

"Our Mrs. McChesney," at the Lyceum, is a moderately amusing, but decidedly unskillful bit of dramatic work. The charming Ethel Barrymore is the heroine of the stories by Edna Ferber. Miss Ferber and George V. Hobart are the playwrights.

"The Mark of the Beast," at the Princess, is a theatrical sex play with one or two strong scenes which are badly overplayed.

"The Unchastened Woman," at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre, is an interesting play by Louis Anspacher. Emily Stevens and Christine Norman do some exceedingly effective acting in

what is about the most worth while, play in New York.

"The Boomerang," at the Belasco, is a charming light comedy. It is admirably acted by an exceptional well trained cast, which includes Martha Hedman, Wallace Eddinger and Arthur Byron.

"The Two Virtues," at the Booth, has E. H. Squire in an excellent light play by Alfred Sutro. The well known English author has not hesitated to write good dialect for its own sake.

"The New York Idea," at the Playhouse, is a witty comedy somewhat after the manner of Congreve. Grace George and an excellent cast do well with the play, but might give an even better performance if there was a little more uniformity of tone.

"Young America," at the Gaiety, is an amusing light comedy about a boy and a dog. Fred Ballard has given Broadway the most wholesome play of the season.

"Rolling Stones," at the Harris, is a brisk play by Edgar Selwyn about adventure in the world of business. It is an amusing piece in spite of certain technical faults.

"Mrs. Boltay's Daughters," at the Comedy, Comment later.

One Act Plays. The Washington Square Players, at the Bantbox Theatre, Fifty-seventh Street and Third Avenue, have a bill of one act plays which are delightfully varied. Maurice Maeterlinck's decorative tragedy "Interior" is splendidly performed, as is Philip Moeller's clever burlesque "Helena's Husband." Perry Mackaye's fantasy, "The Aptick," features the charming Lydia Lopokova. "Fire and Water," a play about the war, is hardly up to the artistic standard set by the other three plays, but at that the programme deserves the attention of every intelligent theatregoer. The curtain does not rise until 8:45.

Farces. "Miss Information," at the George M. Cohan, shows Elsie Janis as many persons all delightful. There is a little music and a deal of graceful dancing.

"Hit-the-Trail-Holiday," at the Astor, is a play about Billy Sunday by George M. Cohan.

Serious Drama. "Common Clay," at the Republic, is a sex drama, handled with wise regard for acting possibilities, even though most of the problems at stake are solved theatrically rather than logically. A cast of well known players includes John Mason, Jane Cowl, Russ Whytall and Robert McWade.

Melodrama. "Sherlock Holmes," at the Empire, has Gillette in his famous impersonation of the great detective. The play, although extremely old fashioned, has lost little of its appeal, and the average theatregoer will have no difficulty in being thrilled when Holmes escapes from the gas chamber.

"Under Fire," at the Hudson Theatre, demonstrates once again the fighting qualities of the Irish. Not Joffre but Captain Larry Redmond saved Paris from the Germans. He did it partly for England, but more especially for the girl he loved. William Courtney is a romantic hero, Violet Heming an attractive heroine, Frank Craven an amusing newspaperman and the play an exciting melodrama of the familiar romantic school.

"The House of Glass," at the Candler Theatre, is a melodrama about the police, by Max Martin. Mary Ryan is a somewhat tearful heroine in the chief role.

Musical Plays. "Alone at Last," at the Shubert, has a brilliant score by Franz Lehár. Moreover, the music is delightfully sung. The libretto lags behind this high standard.

"The Princess Pat," at the Cort, has Eleanor Painter in a Victor Herbert operetta, which contains some of the best work of that talented composer. Miss Painter in the chief part sings, acts and dances in delightful fashion. The book is moderately amusing.

"Chin-Chin," at the Globe, continues along the merry pace which Montgomery and Stone have been setting for so many weeks.

"Hip-Hip-Hooray!" at the Hippodrome, is large scale entertainment done with excellent taste. The huge stage of the theatre is used for many surprises and a touch of so of beauty. The fascinating ice dancer, Charlotte, is perhaps the best feature of the programme.

"Town Topics," at the Century, is a rapidly paced vaudeville show which enlists the merits of a number of well known performers. The humor of Will Rogers is refreshingly novel, and other amusing persons in the cast are Peter Page, Bert Leslie and Trixie Friganza.

"The Girl Who Smiles," at the Longacre Theatre, has the pleasant-voiced Natalie Ait and a tuneful musical score. William Danforth is amusing as one of those gruff stage fathers.

"The Blue Paradise" is a pleasantly musical piece, which also profits by the amusing comedy work of Cecil Lean and Cleo Mayfield.

"The Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic" is cheerful after the theatre entertainment, featured by an unusually fair chorus.

### CONCERTS TO-DAY

Another Sousa Programme, with Additional Features, at Hippodrome.

The Sousa programme at the Hippodrome to-night will be augmented by the music of the "Town Topics" and the "Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic." The programme will be sung in number by Blossom Seeley, Will Rogers, Cameron Sisters, Cross and Josephine, Adelaide and Hughes and Lew Hearn.

Creators and band will give a third pair of concerts at the Standard Theatre, and a long list of stars will entertain to-night at the Winter Garden.

## 'SHERMAN WAS RIGHT' TO BE SEEN TUESDAY

Farce by Frank Mandel Coming to Fulton.

"Sherman Was Right," a farce which derives its situations from complications resulting from the capture of the Prinz Eitel Friedrich, now interned in Newport News, will be revealed at the Fulton Theatre Tuesday evening. The new play is by Frank Mandel, co-author of "Our Wives," seen several seasons ago. H. H. Frazer is the producer.

The play is built primarily upon reasonably familiar farce material, but is said to be developed along original lines. John Smith assumes the name of Johann Schmitt to win Anita Ritter, who is of German inclinations. But the real Johann Schmitt is engaged in a plan to make war munitions for Germany, and the complications pile up. The action is accelerated by the presence in the cast of a Russian Secret Service agent.

Hale Hamilton, who has not been seen in New York since "A Pair of Sixes" was produced, will play the leading part. Others well known will be with him: Jean Shelby, Sam Sidman, a recruit from burlesque; George Lawrence, Ernest Cossart, Suzanne Wilia, Regine Wallace and Martin Alsop, remembered for his work as the crooked mayor in "Seven Keys to Baldpate."

## DRAMA AND FARCE AT UPTOWN HOUSES

"Law of Land" at York—"Natural Law" at Lexington.

"The Law of the Land," George Broadhurst's successful drama of a season ago, will make its first appearance in New York this week at popular prices. It will be the bill at the York Theatre, Lenox Avenue and 119th Street.

Adelaide French will head the cast in the role created by Julia Dean, and she will be supported by Coates Gynne, Frank Stirling, Joseph Merrick, A. T. Hendon, Durwood Penrose and Edward Quinn.

"The Natural Law," with several of the original players in the cast, will return to New York this week at the Lexington Theatre, Lexington Avenue and Fifty-first Street. The play was on view for two weeks last season at the Republic Theatre.

In the cast will be Julie Herne, Teresa Maxwell-Conover, Howard Hall, Conrad Nagel, Robert Lee Allen, Charles Coleman, Maggie Holloway, Fisher and Carolin Waide.

"The Show Shop," with the cast seen in several of the neighborhood theatres, will be the week's attraction at the Standard Theatre.

"High Jinks," Friml's musical jollity of several seasons ago, will be seen this week at the Bronx Opera House.